3.1.5 Mammal Species of Greatest Conservation Need

3.1.5.1 Overview

There are 69 native mammal species in Wisconsin. Of these 69 species, 14 (20%) have been identified as Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Wisconsin. Two of these species are listed as Threatened or Endangered at the state or federal level. Species of Greatest Conservation Need are divided into three groups based on their relative abundance in Wisconsin in comparison with the rest of their range. These divisions address the global role Wisconsin plays in the conservation of these species but leave options open for management.

Table 3-5. Mammal Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Species with a high relative abundance in Wisconsin compared with the rest of their range		
No mammal species in this category.		
Species with a moderate to low relative abundance in Wisconsin compared with the rest of their range		
Common Name	***Scientific Name***	***Page***
Water Shrew	*Sorex palustris*	*3-274*
Northern Long-eared Bat	*Myotis septentrionalis*	*3-276*
Silver-haired Bat	*Lasionycteris noctivagans*	*3-279*
Eastern Red Bat	*Lasiurus borealis*	*3-281*
Hoary Bat	*Lasiurus cinereus*	*3-283*
Franklin's Ground Squirrel	*Spermophilus franklinii*	*3-287*
Northern Flying Squirrel	*Glaucomys sabrinus*	*3-289*
Prairie Vole	*Microtus ochrogaster*	*3-291*
Woodland Vole	*Microtus pinetorum*	*3-293*
Woodland Jumping Mouse	*Napaeozapus insignis*	*3-294*
Gray Wolf	*Canis lupus*	*3-296*
American Marten	*Martes americana*	*3-299*
Species with a very low relative abundance in Wisconsin compared with the rest of their range		
Common Name	***Scientific Name***	***Page***
White-tailed Jackrabbit	*Lepus townsendii*	*3-285*
Moose	*Alces alces*	*3-301*

3.1.5.2 General Threats, Issues and Conservation Actions

General Threats and Issues Affecting Mammal Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Habitat conversion is the primary threat facing mammal Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Wisconsin. Threats to habitat vary widely, from loss of native prairie habitat due to agricultural cultivation, roads, and housing; to changes in forest habitats through management activities that decrease the extent of older forest, nursery trees, or woody debris, or open the forest canopy. While these habitat modifications are a threat to some species, they are a benefit to others. However, old forests with abundant features like large woody debris are scarcer in today's landscape. Non-native invasive plant species can also degrade and simplify habitats, such as invasion of prairies by woody shrubs such as buckthorn. Pollution from a variety of sources is an important threat to our mammal Species of Greatest Conservation Need, including chemicals that can negatively impact mammal species themselves as well as water quality and possibly invertebrate prey species. Changes in ecological processes are also important for many species, including succession of grassland habitats to shrubland and woodland due to lack of fire on the landscape. Relatively new activities on the landscape may pose a threat to some groups of species. For example, wind turbines may result in significant mortality of a variety of bat Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Specific threats affecting individual mammal Species of Greatest Conservation Need are listed on the following pages.

General Conservation Actions for Mammal Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Mammal Species of Greatest Conservation Need use a wide variety of habitats from sand prairies to old growth forests to streams to caves; managing and protecting these diverse habitats from fragmentation, degradation, and destruction are primary actions proposed for conserving mammal Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Wisconsin. This will include a wide variety of efforts that includes protecting bat hibernacula (caves and abandoned mines), managing prairies to reduce impacts of invasive plant species and natural succession, and promoting forest management practices that protect summer tree roosting areas. Changes in laws and policies are needed to increase protection for both species and their habitats. Research is another area in need of critical action for mammal Species of Greatest Conservation Need—more information on status, distribution, population trends, genetics, habitat use and requirements, effective survey techniques, and other factors is needed to adequately and more effectively work to conserve many species and their habitats. Specific conservation actions proposed for individual mammal Species of Greatest Conservation Need are listed on the following pages.

References for Specific Threats, Issues and Conservations Actions for Mammal Species of Greatest Conservation Need

The following references, along with other sources, personal observations and unpublished data, provide background or justification for specific threats and conservation actions listed on the following pages for the individual mammal Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

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